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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the extent to which children consider writing strategies in relation to types of writing. Data were evolved by interviewing 48 fifth-grade children on their processes of evaluating other children's papers. Each child was asked to read paired texts, judge their comparative quality, and explain the basis of their judgments. They were also asked to define the genre in which the texts were written. The texts included stories, essays, and persuasive writings. Data analysis confirmed that children do recognize writing strategies according to their definitions of each type of writing. Findings reinforce the importance of linking writing strategies with types of writing in teaching writing. (Contains 28 references; appendixes contain the texts, a list of points mentioned by children for each text, and children's definitions of genre.) (Author/RS)

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Children's Evaluations of Children's Texts: The Relationship Between Types of Writing and Writing Strategies

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Abstract

This study investigated the extent to which children consider writing strategies in relation to types of writing. Data was evolved by interviewing forty-eight children on their processes of evaluating other children's papers. Each child was asked to read a paired texts, judge their comparative quality, and explain the basis of their judgments. They were also asked to define the genre in which the texts were written. The texts included stories, essays, and persuasive writings. The data analysis confirmed that children do recognize writing strategies according to their definitions of each type of writing. This finding reinforces the importance of linking writing strategies with types of writing in teaching writing.

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Traditional writing instruction tended to over-emphasize the value of personal narratives and stories. From a critique of that tradition, a new focus arose in writing instruction--one in which children are exposed to various kinds of language use and are provided with opportunities to write for a variety of situations using various writing genres. This study shares the belief that it is useful to provide a wide variety of writing experiences to children, but it argues that there is still no consensus on *how* we should teach genre. That is, although many studies--both theoretical and practical--have suggested ways to teach genre, in reality the filed is still open to investigation. This study provides a method to examine how learners identify genres and attempts to gain insight into the implementation of genre theories. Writing instruction will be re-examined by 1) studying the learners' point of view--how children recognize writing strategies, and 2) considering how these findings could be implemented in a pedagogical program.

Discourse theories and genre studies have provided ways to analyze language use in the real world. James Moffett (1968), James Kinneavy (1971), James Britton (1975), and Frank D'angelo (1975) developed systems to categorize language use, establishing criteria for genre categorization. Moffett's categorization is a two-dimensional system: one element is the relationship between the abstractive altitude of the subject and the speaker; the other is the relationship between the speaker and his or her distance from the listener. Similarly, Britton's system has two dimensions: the function of the subject, and the intimacy between the speaker and the listener. Kinneavy divided the elements into four components of communication: the encoder, the decoder, the subject, and the sign. D'angelo developed a classification based on cognition, which is divided into non-logical topics and logical topics, each having subdivisions. For example, a subdivision under logical topics is static, which is broken into six categories: description, definition, division into parts, classification, exemplification, and comparison.

The categorical criteria of the above frameworks have been used as writing strategies in developing writing lessons. Moffett and Wagner (1994) developed a writing curriculum in which writing strategies are categorized and presented based on Moffett's two dimensions of language use. For example, one criterion--the abstractness of the subject--is presented as a writing strategy--verb tense--in the lessons. Children are supposed to learn the present tense when they learn the genre "record;" they learn the past tense when they write "reports" and the future tense when they write in the genre "generalization." D'angelo's criterion, the thinking process, can also be presented as a set of strategies when developing a writing curriculum. For example, comparison or classification can be presented to students as a strategy as well as a criterion to for dividing discourses.

These discourse theories, which presented categorical criteria for classifying genres, eventually gave rise to analyses which depicted language use as a more complicated process. The Australian Genre School (Martin, 1989; Kress, 1988; Sawyer & Watson, 1988; Dixon, 1988) conducted studies centered on genre and its implementation. Some of these scholars questioned the assumption that we can categorize language use; since then, controversy has arisen concerning the possibility of teaching genre. Scholars and practitioners (Gundlach, Litowitz, & Moses 1979; Moffett and & Wagner, 1992; Willimam & Colomb, 1993) who claim we can teach genre believe it is possible to categorize types of writing at least to some degree and, therefore, argue that we should teach genre-specific strategies. Those who take this position have

argued that certain features of language use--for example, verb tense (Dixon, 1989), text structure (Pappas et al. 1990), or the purpose of the text (Martin, 1989)--are useful in teaching genre.

Those who disagree (Berkencotter & Huckin, 1993; Freadman, 1988; Freedman, 1993; Kamberelis, 1995) contend that language use is situated in particular contexts and, thus, is far too complex to be subject to generalization. These researchers argue that language features are multiple and overlapping, making it impossible to select one or two and present them as general writing strategies.

Thus, although scholars on both sides of the debate agree that it is useful to make children write in various genres, they disagree about how we should provide different writing situations. Many schools, colleges, and institutions offer writing curricula (McCleary, 1981; Moffett, 1968; Moffett & Wagner, 1992; Bennett, 1982; Cappuccilli, 1982) and assessment programs (Britton et al., 1975; Peckman, 1987) based on some particular theories of discourse or genre. Yet, to what extent these programs reflect our language use--language use in the real world--is unknown. Can we generalize genre-specific writing strategies? If so, how, and what are the genre-specific writing strategies we can teach? These questions are open to further exploration.

Some studies have suggested a theoretical framework that integrates these two apparently contradictory positions. Thomas Newkirk (1989), for example, observes young children's writing and claims that the fact that children often make "lists" reveals their ability to identify and use genres that are used in real society. However, at the same time, he finds that how children classify the items on those lists reflects their cognitive ability. Thus Newkirk argues that it is possible and useful to classify language use, but that certain limitations, such as developmental stages, should be taken into account when we present these classifications to children.

John Dixon (1999) argues for the importance of seeing "a set of structuring choices" (p.12) existing within the language. In contrast to some discourse theories, Dixon views language use as more complicated than a one-to-one relationship between writing strategies and types of writing; consequently, he recommends presenting multiple features when teaching genre. Christine Pappas and her colleagues (1990) claim that genres are typical/atypical, having multiple and, moreover, overlapping features. They draw a wave-like diagram to show how genres are typical and argue that this perspective allows us to build writing instructions in productive ways. They claim that because some genres are atypical or blurred with each other, they are difficult to identify, but that this does not mean that we cannot categorize genre. The perspective of Pappas and her colleagues also allows us to understand that children's difficulty in identifying some genres is not necessarily due to a lack of sufficient cognitive development for recognizing genre, but because the genres themselves are atypical.

These studies demonstrate the possibility of viewing genre as multi-featured and overlapping, but still simple enough to serve as a basis for writing instruction. However, several questions now arise: to what extent do genres overlap? What the are common features among all genres and which are specific to each genre? How do we identify these distinctions? These questions, which are significant for the implementation of genre theories, are still unanswered.

One way to gain insight into the above issues is to examine children's recognition of the relationship between writing strategies--the features of language use considered in producing a text--and types of writing--classified and labeled writing situations through which texts are produced. That is, the gap between the opposing two positions discussed above is due to the failure to consider the learner's point of view. Do children recognize writing strategies according to the types of writing? If so, how?

Some researchers have attempted to answer to these questions. Gundlach, Litowitz, and Moses (1985) examine how children handle all the relations between the components of communication simultaneously and dynamically. They suggest that there are three key relationships in any writing activity: the relationships between writer and reader, between the writer and the subject, and between the writer and the composition itself. Accordingly, they claim that writing is a process in which the writer negotiates a series of key relationships. From this perspective, they criticize Britton and Moffett's theory as failing to make a clear distinction between spoken and written discourse. For example, they argue that writing differs from speaking because when writing, the writer takes on the complex cognitive task of imagining a reader and writing from that context. Gundlach and his colleagues imply that the act of writing is complex, but that children are capable of handling its complexity. Thus it is productive to teach genre if we unfold this complexity by using these key relationships.

Related studies that focus on audience have attempted to examine how the learner can be sensitive to the complexity of a context. Arthur E. Walzer (1985) compares three articles that were produced by the same author but for different audiences and concludes that the differences in the text derive from how the author interpreted the audiences' background knowledge. Gisa Kirsh (1991) finds that writers are sensitive to the authority of an audience; writers were more concerned with readers' reactions when writing for a faculty committee, but more concerned with informational contents when writing for a freshman student. Theresa M. Redd-Boyd and Wayne H. Slater (1989) compared the effectiveness of presenting an imaginary assigned reader, a real assigned reader, and an unassigned reader. They found that assigning an audience obviously improved the students' writing, yet there was no difference in the effectiveness of the imaginary or real assigned readers. Pfister and Petrick (1980) present a heuristic model for creating audiences in developing writing discourse. They analyze audience characteristics such as the environment of the audience, the subject interpreted by the audience, or the relationship between the audience and the writer, and argue that these factors are useful for teaching. All of these studies show how writers are sensitive to the characteristics of the audience.

Some studies on audience awareness have pointed out that writers write differently for evaluators than for other audiences. Laura Frank (1992) examines how student's adaptations to audience differ when they write for intended audiences rather than for the teacher or researcher as evaluators. Frank found that types of adaptations such as changes in voice, text-length, adjectives, and appeals, were made according to whether the paper was written for a peer reader or an instructor. Moreover, the result showed that the writers, who were fifth graders, were more successful at writing for a younger child (third grader) than for an instructor. She attributes this to the fact that the assigned readers' needs and expectations were easier to anticipate than were the instructor's.

Margaret A. Mansfield (1993) argues that making the real audience evaluate the text is crucial in setting up a writing lesson. She values the attempt of setting a "real audience" but realizes that this situation will not be fully successful if there is another reader who actually grades the papers. In order to overcome this "double audience" problem, in Peter Elbow's term, Mansfield suggests that this real audience be the actual evaluator. Frank and Mansfield's study not only shows the writer's sensitivity in analyzing the characteristic of audience, but shows concern for how a "double audience" is unproductive for developing a writing situation.

The above studies show how the learner takes into account the complexity of contexts in writing; thus, it can be concluded that it is productive to present multiple features of language use in teaching writing. However, again, how these features of language use relate to types of writing is open to further investigation. When we teach genre, is it appropriate to present genre-specific strategies, and if so, how? Further concrete suggestions are needed to develop instructions that reflect our real language use.

The present study therefore focuses on the learner's recognition--on how children perceive the relationship between writing strategies and types of writing when evaluating a text. Knowledge of the child's perspective in reading texts, I believe, can help us develop better writing instructions. Therefore, I examine children's recognition, seeking to determine how genre can be used--and how it cannot--when teaching writing.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the following issues. What kinds of strategies do children recognize when they evaluate written texts? To what extent do children consider these writing strategies in relation to writing situations? And, if children do consider the relationships between writing strategies and writing situations, *how* do they do so?

The present study rests on the following assumptions. First, written texts can be evaluated effectively by considering the relationship between the writing situation and the writing strategies. Second, we can construct an effective writing situation by addressing a clear purpose, audience, and the subject. Without taking into account the context, it is difficult to assess the validity or quality of the production. Third, one effective way to evaluate a written text is to have the assigned reader evaluate the text. In light of the problem raised by the existence of a double audience, this study is designed to have the actual reader evaluate the texts.

Methods

I collected three pairs of children's texts (six in all), each pair written for the same situation but using different strategies, and made children compare these paired texts. I interviewed the children and asked which text they thought was better-written for the given situation and why. In doing so, I identified the features of text that children recognized and analyzed how they related them to the writing situations.

Participants

The participants were forty-eight fifth-grade children from two classes taught by a single teacher taught for two consecutive years. The teacher taught these classes in different schools, both mid-sized schools representing a variety of ethnic groups, in mid-sized cities in Illinois. Half of the students

were girls and half were boys. These children had been exposed to various kinds of writing tasks, since the classroom teacher was particularly interested in teaching writing. The teacher also provided children with various kinds of writing strategies when assigning writing tasks. Thus, it is assumed that the children who participated were relatively well-exposed to a rich environment in terms of the explicit teaching of generic strategies.

Texts

The study used texts written for three different writing situations: 1) an essay, 2) a story, and 3) a persuasive writing exercise (See Appendix A). Although the debate over how to identify genres is not yet settled, I chose such genres and their labels in this study because they are familiar to the children. In this way, I will be able to probe how children define the genres and how they identify the writing strategies.

The essays were written about the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program, in which children were involved for several month in fall. I chose one text from this classroom and another text from the another fifth grade classroom in the same school because the children in the first classroom were provided with a unified strategy for writing an essay. The strategy was to write what they had learned from the program and to give statements about its effectiveness. No specific strategy was presented in the other classroom. The audience assigned for this task consisted of the students' classmates.

The two story texts were selected from one classroom in which the children had several opportunities of creative writing. One story was written as "a creative constellation." Children were supposed to imagine a made-up constellation and write a story about its origin. The teacher showed the children some examples of former students' work. The second story was a scary story written close to Halloween. The students brainstormed to come up with scary ideas before they started writing their own stories. The audience for both of the stories consisted of classmates.

For the persuasive writing exercise, although the students were allowed to write in favor of either position (whether or not students should have homework) both texts were selected from the same position, that students should not have homework. This was necessary in order to make the pair comparable, since the amount and the nature of the information included in the text could differ for both positions. However, in the process of production, the writing situation differed between the two texts.

One text was chosen from the classroom in which the text was written to persuade a court jury. The teacher suggested strategies such as stating a position and listing the reasons in the introductory paragraph, then giving several reasons to support the opinion. She then suggested they re-state their opinion in the final paragraph. She listed some phrases which might help catch the audience's attention and others which might help create a powerful ending. The other text was selected from the other classroom, where students had argued the opposite position. The teacher asked the students whether they thought students should have homework and then gave each student a persuasive paper which was written from the opposite position. The children then wrote a counter-argument to persuade the author of the paper. In this classroom, some phrases were provided to children so that they could state counter-arguments.

I avoided selecting the texts produced from writing lessons in which there was no clear purpose, audience, or a subject. As seen in the studies by

Frank and Mansfield, the framework of the writing task shapes the text production and, thus, the effectiveness of the evaluation. I read most of the texts that the children had produced and also read all the materials the teacher gave to the children as she presented the writing lessons. Among those writing lessons, I chose the above three pairs of text, which I judged as having been produced in clearly specified situations.

I selected two texts for each writing situation, texts which were also similar in length. I typed all six texts with their titles, and printed them out in the same font. I did not type the authors' names. No illustrations were used.

Interviews

I conducted one-on-one interviews with sixteen children (eight boys and eight girls) for each pair of texts. Before I showed the papers to the child, I explained that I needed his/her help to compare and evaluate the two papers, and that the papers were "essays" or "stories" or "persuasive writings." When I showed the two papers, I asked the child whether s/he would like to read them aloud or silently. I switched the order of the papers to control for possible effects of order, showing one text first to one half of the children and the other text first to the other half.

After the child had finished reading the two texts, I asked which s/he thought was better written, and why. When they pointed out specific parts of the texts, I asked them to mark the sheet. At the end of each interview, I shifted to general questions, asking, "What do you think an essay (or story or a persuasive writing) is?" I spent ten to fifteen minutes on each interview.

Results

Kinds of strategies children recognize in evaluating written texts

In the study as a whole, children pointed out a total of 80 writing strategies. This number may differ according to how we define and categorize the writing strategies; here, we counted the number of reasons that children pointed out in explaining why one paper was better-written than the other. For example, different reasons such as "It starts from a question," "The title matches the content of the paper," or "It has a flow," were each counted as a distinct writing strategy. However, statements that indicated an identical reason expressed either concretely or not, such as "It sounds light," and "It has some jokes," were counted as one writing strategy. Children pointed out the following numbers of writing strategies for each type of writing: 31 strategies for the essay, 28 strategies for the story, and 21 strategies for the persuasive writing exercise.

Essay. Appendix B shows the strategies children pointed out for each type of writing. In the essays, the four major sets of strategies children mentioned were: opinion and/or fact, variety/specificity in content, style, and audience appeal. Following is a description of each set of strategies.

"Fact," "opinion," and "feeling" were the terms often heard in the interviews in which children evaluated essays. Many children (13) pointed to some particular part and stated that the essay was well written because it used such "facts." Similarly, some children (9) commented on the amount of fact or opinion/feeling, telling the essay had "many facts," or pointing out that it had "opinion and feelings more than facts." These results show that children evaluate an essay by considering whether it has facts, opinions, or feelings and, moreover, that they consider the balance between these elements.

In evaluating essays, the second writing strategy that children recognized most (8) was whether the content had variety or specificity in its

information. Statements such as "It talks about many things" or "This is shorter, but makes more sense" indicate that one of the criteria that children use in evaluating an essay is whether it covers a variety of information and if the information is discussed in detail.

Another writing strategy mentioned in regard to the essays (6) pertained to style. For example, in commenting on the essay, "A DARE Kid . . . ," children pointed out its stylistic characteristics, such as the use of "spice words" (a term taught in this class to refer to words used to catch the readers' attention), the use of a one-word sentence, the ease of reading due to the use of jokes, or the fact that it sounded like an interview. Moreover, the last, poetic, part of "A DARE Kid . . ." seemed to have a strong impact on the children's evaluations. Children who chose this essay as being better-written (6) commonly preferred this part because they thought it was appealing, while children who chose the other essay evaluated the poem as making no sense or being unrealistic.

Three children pointed out strategies regarding the audience. Their comments such as "it talks to people, not just yourself," or "it tells about drugs to people who don't know about drugs--like little children" show that some children are aware of the audience in general, and some are aware of some specific characteristic of the audience. In the second statement above, the child is concerned about the background knowledge of the audience.

Stories. In the story genre, children evaluated the papers from a different point of view. The five major strategies children mentioned were realism, appeal to feeling, beginning/ending, description, and the use of dialogue. The strategy recognized by the largest number of children (6) was realism. Despite the fact that the two stories were written in different situations--one as the invention of the origin of a constellation, the other as a scary Halloween story--children who chose either story pointed out that a story could be made-up, but has to "have some reality in it," or "make sense." Many children commented that a story is more interesting when it makes them think that the same thing may happen in their own life. Thus, children seemed to evaluate the stories from the perspective of whether the prompt, setting, or the descriptions were realistic enough to make it interesting. This result conflicts with the fact that educators tend to present fictional stories to children as imaginative, having unusual settings and characters--a stereotyped image of creative writing. We do not often see writing lessons or instructional manuals stating that creative stories must be presented as realistic. These children's comments may have useful implications for the teaching of fiction: unusualness does not necessarily make a good creative story; rather it is how the unusualness is embedded in realism.

Another strategy pointed out by many children (6) was the appeal to the readers' feelings, such as being "scary" or "funny." The constellation story was appealing for its funniness, the Halloween story for its scariness. This indicates that children, in evaluating stories, use appeals to the reader's feelings as a criterion--a phenomenon which many not have been fully explored. Teachers have tended to teach stories as a single genre characterized by several elements--a setting, characters, and events in sequential time order, presented in a creative way to catch the readers' attention. However, the children's responses in this study imply that stories have various purposes and therefore could be taught differently according to each of those purposes.

Some children (4) paid attention to strategies regarding the beginning and the ending of the story. They found that the beginning "sounds like a story" or that the ending was "neat." These statements coincide with the fact that in much writing instruction, the beginnings and the endings of fictional stories are emphasized.

The same number of children pointed out the degree of detail in the stories' descriptions. They indicated specific parts and commented that they could "picture it" or that the story told "what exactly happened." This strategy also coincides with common ways of teaching stories.

Three children mentioned the role of dialogue. In fact, "The Cursed Island" had many dialogues and "Bobby and the Pizza" had none. A child who mentioned this difference said, "Dialogue shows the characters' personality and attitudes. I think it's better to use a lot of dialogue and 'show' it to the reader as the story goes on than to 'tell' it at the beginning of the story." This child seem to understand clearly the role of dialogues in stories.

No child discussed the organization of the stories. In so much reading and writing instruction, we call children's attention to the structure of stories. Yet, in this study, the children did not evaluate stories for their structure. They tended to focus more on the strategies that referred to the content of the story than on those pertaining to its organization. For example, many recognized "*what* strategies" such as whether it was realistic, whether it had action, or whether it had dialogue. But not many children pointed out "*how* strategies"--how the contents were organized. It is difficult to determine the cause of these results. The writing instruction given in this class may have had a major influence on this tendency. However, these results imply that it is worth considering whether writing strategies pertaining to organization are related to children's developmental stages or to their understanding of the genre.

Persuasive writing. In evaluating the persuasive writing essays, the major strategies children noted were: the quality and amount of reasoning, audience appeal, and organization. Many children (12) chose the better essay according to its reasoning. Many of them just said they preferred the text because "the reason is good," but some (4) analyzed the nature of the reasons as "concrete," "gives examples," or "refers more to real life." This shows that many fifth graders evaluate persuasive papers by focusing on their reasoning, yet few children are able to recognize the nature or advantage of the reasons. Concrete examples are effective in persuasion because they remind readers of their own experience, a strategy which may help change their point of view. Similarly, reasons referring to real life are effective because they provide evidence. Children do not seem to be aware of these aspects of good reasoning. This suggests that it may be desirable to develop writing instruction that focuses on the nature of reasoning in teaching persuasion.

Apart from the nature of the reasoning, two children mentioned the amount of reasoning. One child chose the "Persuasive Paper" because of its many reasons, while another child preferred "Why I think . . ." because of its elaboration on a single topic. As for the essay, children's criteria for evaluating a persuasive paper are based on how broadly the paper covers the reasons or how much detail is give when one reason is discussed.

Three children mentioned the audience. These statements included the fact the paper "talks to people" or that it "thinks about the people who will read it." Yet like the above results for reasoning, children's comments reveal

the lack of a concrete audience. This again implies the possibility of teaching children to consider the nature of the audience in persuasion.

For the children in this study, there was greater complexity involved in evaluating the persuasive papers than there was for the other two genres. In the interviews, each child was given a paper which expressed an opinion opposite his or her own. Thus, children had to evaluate texts which were different from their own points of view, focusing only on the strategies. This presented a problem for only one child, who stated, "I don't agree with both of these papers, so neither one is well-written." All the other children succeeded in evaluating papers that were different from their own point of view. Among these children, one even pointed out the inconsistency of the argument, noting that the paper stated, "Homework cuts our time to relax and play" in one part, while claiming in another that "Everything that we learn in school is not everything we want to learn about. We should have to do all work at school so we can do these things at home."

In total, among the eighteen children who evaluated the persuasive papers, one child could not step back from her position, sixteen children evaluated the papers apart from their own viewpoint, and one child recognized the strategy from a higher-level perspective. We may infer from these results that there may be some development-related issues in teaching persuasive writing strategies to children. However, again, further studies are needed to explore the extent to which children's cognitive stages are related to the recognition of genre.

Interestingly, one child preferred a paper because the paper told "something in between the two positions." This child was referring to the "Persuasive Paper," which stated that fifth graders should not have homework in general, but that long-term assignments were exceptional. We may assume that this child was implying that all issues could not necessarily be viewed from two positions. This is important because children's ability to analyze the topic itself directly relates to the kinds of reasoning they may point out and the ways in which they will prioritize them.

Four children mentioned organization in the persuasive papers. "Why I think . . " was composed by a large main paragraph, preceded and followed by a one-sentence introduction and conclusion. "Persuasive Paper" had one paragraph for each of the three reasons. All four children voted for the later paper. This indicates that children in fifth grade have some awareness of paragraphing and balance.

Children's considerations of writing strategies in relation to the types of writing

The writing strategies children recognized in all three genres were the beginning, the flow, spelling, and the audience appeal. All the other points mentioned were specific to each genre. This indicates that children, in evaluating texts, use genre-specific strategies to a certain extent.

The ways in which children recognized connections between writing strategies and types of writing was examined by comparing the children's identification of strategies, discussed above, with their definitions of different writing genres.

When asked, "What do you think an essay is?" all the children interviewed replied that it was a kind of writing that had either facts, opinions, or feelings (See Appendix C). Moreover, some children defined an essay by specifying the balance of those factors. The writing strategies that

the largest number of children pointed out in evaluating the essays were strategies regarding facts, opinions, or feelings. This consistency between genre definition and writing strategies identified shows that children do indeed evaluate an essay according to its definition.

The same conclusion can be made by looking at the relationship between children's preferences and their definitions. As seen in Appendix C, children who view essays as texts that have more opinions and feelings chose "A DARE KID . . . , " which uses the author's opinions more than does the other essay. Children who selected "What D.A.R.E. means . . ." emphasized that presenting facts is an important aspect of an essay. One child who stated that essays needed balance in opinion and facts chose "What D.A.R.E. means . . ." as the better-written of the two.

In defining stories, eleven children focused on factors regarding the content of the story, such as plot, characters, actions, or a conclusion. Nine children defined stories according to the appeal to the reader, such as whether it was funny, exciting, or scary. Nine children defined stories by referring to the nature of the story as creative or adventurous. Five children stated that stories describe; others said it was something realistic, written using dialogues, or that it has a beginning, middle, and an end. The definition mentioned by the largest number of children--the appeal to the readers' feelings and the nature of the story--coincides with the strategy that the second largest number of children mentioned. The strategy that the largest number of children mentioned coincides with the definition that a third of the children pointed out. These results lead us to conclude that the children evaluated the stories according to their definitions of a story.

Specifically, children who chose "Bobby and the Pizza" gave funniness as a primary characteristic of stories, while children who chose "The Cursed Island" said that it is crucial that stories be spooky, adventurous, action-packed, exciting, and "make us wonder." In fact, "Bobby and the Pizza" is more funny than the other; "The Cursed Island" is more scary, has more action, makes us wonder more, and is more exciting.

Similar results were found for children's evaluation of the persuasive writing samples. Thirteen children defined persuasive writing by saying its purpose was to persuade or to try to convince someone. Nine children defined it by referring to the means of persuasion, such as the use of good reasons, giving many ideas, or writing some strong facts. Again, these definitions coincide with the strategies children mentioned.

In persuasive writing, although the children voted for different texts, they gave similar definitions of the genre. It appears that children's text selection depended not on how they viewed persuasive writing, but on how they evaluated the reasons and examples presented in the texts. Although we see clear evidence, here, that children evaluate persuasive papers according to their definitions of persuasive writing, this indicates that teaching how to give powerful reasons and examples in persuasion may better help children in writing strong persuasive papers.

The match between children's definitions of each genre and the writing strategies they mentioned in evaluating the paired papers is clear evidence that children recognize writing strategies according to the types of writing.

No particular tendency in recognition was found when comparing girls to boys.

Discussion

The results of this study provide clear evidence that children recognize writing strategies according to writing genres. Although these results are derived from the analysis of children's evaluations of texts, the findings can be usefully applied to the design of pedagogical materials. That is, because children--in particular, fifth graders--are able to identify writing strategies in relation to types of writing, we can conclude that to a certain extent it is effective to teach genre-specific strategies.

The strategies children recognized in evaluating each genre give new insights into the teaching of each type of writing. For example, the variety and specificity of information in the essay genre can be an productive instructional focus in teaching essay. How will the essay sound when it covers variety of information, and how will it sound when particular issue is under focus? Which of the two approaches is most effective for certain situations and why? These are some strategies that may be discussed in essay writing. The children's' focus on realism in the story genre is a strategy that seems to contradict our shared notions of creative writing. Although we may stress the unusualness and creativity of fiction, we might also consider how realism appeals to the reader. In persuasive writing, the quality of reasons is a strategy that has not been stressed in young children's writing instructions. Following Susan Bennett, who presents a persuasive writing curriculum for K-12, we can conclude that more concrete suggestions are needed to develop systematic instruction for persuasive writing. This study shows that children are able to analyze elements of reasoning, an aspect of writing which has received more attention in college writing programs.

The results of this research also indicate a variety of possibilities for presenting overlapping strategies. Children pointed out audience appeal in all three genres; however, the nature of the appeal differed among genres. In the essay genre, background knowledge of the audience was one of the points that was mentioned, while in the story genre, many children commented on the feeling of the audience. This indicates that, for any type of writing, it is productive to teach children ways to analyze the nature of audience and to consider the characteristics of audience that work best for the situation.

Regarding the controversy of whether we can teach genre, the result of this study supports the position that we can, to some extent. The study also provides us with some suggestions about the extent to which we can present genre-specific strategies. The overlapping strategies that children pointed out, for example strategies regarding audience, can be considered as strategies that we may present as common to all genres. In teaching writing strategies, then, it is important that the strategies be presented to the students in a manner that shows their specificity to particular genres.

The range in kinds of writing strategies mentioned by the children illustrates the typical/atypical definition that Pappas and her colleagues propose. Although the writing strategies in this study have been defined as separable from types of writing, the range of comments children made show that the notion of writing strategy is broad, having multiple levels, some of which even blur into the notion of genre. For example, a writing strategy pointed out in story evaluation--the appeal to an audience's feelings-- can be considered more as a matter of purpose than of strategy. But strategies such as including dialogue or making a sentence short seem to be more like devices to be pursued than purposes. Comments on mechanical elements such as spelling seem to have even less connection with the specific purpose of the situation.

This range in kinds of strategies--some of which are inseparable from the component of the situation itself, while others can be distinguished from the situation--is an area that merits further research.

The results of this study provide insights into the area of evaluation as well as instructional interventions. The results indicate the potential productiveness of developing criteria for evaluating texts according to the types of writing. Yet, again, what criteria are effective for evaluating a genre and to what extent they are specific is open to further investigation. Discourse theories and genre theories have suggested criteria for categorizing types of writing, yet many of them have no framework to show how features of different genres interrelate. This study provides some insight into specifying strategies in types of writing, yet more concrete studies are needed to develop effective practices.

There is a need to investigate the extent to which developmental stages matter in teaching writing strategies. Despite the fact that specifying text structure is a popular way to teach genre, writing strategies regarding organization were not often mentioned by the children in this study. Content-related strategies, on the other hand, were frequently pointed out through all the genres. If we distinguish writing strategies that regard the *what* of the writing--content-related strategies--from those that refer to the *how* of the writing--structure-related strategies--the results indicate that children, at least in this study, tend to recognize the *what* strategies much more easily than the *how* strategies. This tendency was clear even though the classroom teacher often specified the text structure in presenting a genre to children. This implies that the *how* strategies may require higher-level cognitive skills to identify. If the *how* strategies of writing require higher-level thinking, we need to find a way to integrate the developmental dimension of children's cognition and the repertoire of types of writing, as Newkirk suggests. Although few studies have examined this relationship, they are sufficient to develop a systematic writing curriculum. We need to question some assumptions that underlie our practices. For example, teaching text structure as a major strategy may not be a productive way to teach genre for lower elementary students.

In sum, the results of this study provide a rich understanding of how children recognize strategies in written texts. Because the texts were written for a specific purpose, audience, and subject, children could evaluate them according to the situation. The method design in which the addressed readers evaluated the texts allowed the children compare the texts in a precise manner. The design of the study, which made the children compare the texts and explain the reasons for their choices, also allowed the children to mention various kinds of writing strategies. The genres examined may be expanded in further studies. Grade levels may be expanded as well, to examine the developmental dimensions of children's recognition.

If the findings of this study are implemented in new writing curricula, it is important to remember the difference between what children can recognize and what may be effective in teaching. In light of Lev Vygotsky's (1986) argument about the zone of proximal development, we must remember that the children's responses alone do not by necessarily indicate the most productive way to teach. Further exploration is needed to determine how the findings of this study can best be transformed into pedagogy.

Finally, it is important to note that this research is a pilot study designed to expand our understanding in the area. The analysis relies on data from two

elementary school classes taught by a single teacher. Many of the tendencies found in the responses of the children may have been directly influenced by the instructions given in these classes. On the other hand, the processes through which children acquire definitions of genre are complex and are based on broad social experiences such as recognizing signs, reading magazines, watching videos, or learning through computers. How each child develops knowledge of genres through these experiences is too complex a process to analyze. Therefore, because we do not know the extent to which the writing instructions given in this class influenced the children's' responses, I present these results, as well as the method employed, as an exploratory study of the role of genre in writing pedagogy.

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Appendix A
The Texts

<Essay 1>

A DARE KID TO A DARE ADULT

The first question is What is DARE? DARE is Drug Abuse Resistance Education, a program established within the school setting that has activities that help students have a working tool to resist drugs and violence.

I feel confident because now I know more than I knew before the introduction of the program. I feel that I can handle the pressures of being asked to do drugs or partake in violent activities. I feel good about being a part of the DARE class and we need to continue to have DARE in hopes that a greater number of students will feel as I do. Stronger.

I learned that in order to stay drug-free I need to keep away from drug infected areas. I need to say "No" with meaning and then walk away with no hard feelings. In order to avoid violence, I need to stay away from areas of potential violence, I need to have friends who are trustworthy and can help me when I say "NO" to drugs or danger.

It is important to be drug-free because it'll ruin my chances of a decent education as well as my mental and physical health. My family will suffer and I will suffer the consequences of living a drug life. It is important to avoid violence because violence leads to imprisonment, which leads to poverty which leads to death.

The D.A.R.E. program can help you develop the proper resistance to be drug-free and avoid violence. That's wonderful feeling.

D.A.R.E.
I want to live and be drug-free for my family, my friends and
especially for me!
I'm glad that I'm apart of D.A.R.E. which helps me to know, fight, and
beware.
Of the dangers that crowd our city with people who do drugs and
kill and think it's all pretty.
I was told always beware cause in these days.....
IT'S A JUNGLE OUT THERE!!!

<Essay 2>

What D.A.R.E. Means To Me

In D.A.R.E. I learned to say no to drugs. There are Two major ways to do this. These ways are: just say no and walk away, and; the other way is to keep saying no until they give up. There are lots of other ways to say no to drugs. In these ways you don't actually say no. Some of these ways are: to give reason why not, use the cold shoulder, avoid the situation, change the subject, and use the method of strength in numbers.

I have learned that drugs are very bad for you. For example, the consequences of using Alcohol are: it makes you drunk, it might make you vomit, and it makes you violent. The consequences of using Marijuana are: it slows your reflexes, gives you a poor memory, and it makes you have short attention span. The consequences of using Tabacco are: it gives you stained teeth, it makes your breath smell, and it gives you cancer.

I think that every school should have D.A.R.E. I think that if every school had D.A.R.E. that it would decrease the number of people that use and deal drugs. It would decrease the number of people that use and deal drugs because they would learn the consequences or what would happen to them if they took drugs. They would also learn that it is not cool to take drugs, it is very bad to take drugs. I think D.A.R.E. was a good experience for me. It was a good experience because I got the opportunity to learn about drugs and what they do to your body.

<Story 1>

The Cursed Island

Once upon a time there was an old lady that lived on an island. Every full moon she would turn into a . . . Ware Wolf, a great big old ware wolf. Well, one day there were explorers searching for gold. They found the old lady in her old rocking chair in her old house. She said "Leave! Or you will die!" They laughed and went away. Well, that night, the old lady turned into a ware wolf and tracked down the explorers. She found them! One man said "Run! I'll sacrifice myself for you all."
Well, the explorers ran, the man said, "Da- da- da-,
BOO!"
And the ware wolf ran off never to be seen again!

<Story 2>

Bobby and His Pizza

There once was a pizza delivery boy named Bobby. He was very careless. Almost every time he would trip and mess his pizza. So his boss did not let him do any deliveries!!
But one night no one was working because of New Years Eve, but Bobby! So his boss had to let him do the delivery!
When he was walking down the road, there was a meteoroid but he didn't notice it!! Then he triped. Bobby and the pizza flew so high that they reached the sky!!! They became a constellation, "Bobby and his Pizza."

<Persuasive Paper 1>

Persuasive Paper

No, I don't think elementary students should have homework because I think after a long day at school they should be able to rest at home. Also they could have time to work on things like book reports, graphs, and science labs that they couldn't do at school. Sometimes they could have company and would want to talk to them, but the students would be stuck in their rooms doing homework (which I think is kind of rude).

The reason I say they shouldn't have homework at night so they can rest is that sometimes they have been working so hard at school that they just come home and fall asleep. Or sometimes they might not have anytime to work and they get loads of homework, and stay up untill ten o'clock doing homework. Then they will be very tired the next day.

I said that if they don't have homework they could work on book reports, graphs, and science labs. The reason I say this is because the long term assignments take more time to do, and are worth more points (and a better grade). I know those long term assignments are homework but that is different. You will probably never find time to do those in the classroom.

When I said that they could have company and would have to be in their room all night doing homework. That happened to me before, my uncle and

cousin had come over and I was wanting to talk with them but I was in my room doing homework, and when I got finished they were leaving.

So like I said, I don't think elementary students should have homework.

<Persuasive Paper 2>

Why I think we shouldn't have homework

No, I don't think kids should get homework.

It's hard enough going to school all day, and then having homework all night! Please give us kids a break. Homework cuts our time to relax and play. It gets us into trouble if we don't get it done. When I get homework (which is always a lot) I stay up half the night doing it. And isn't it important for a student to get lots of rest so they won't fall asleep in class the next day?! Yes, it is! It might make us smarter but it does not help us get rest and relax! Now, I know you are thinking, "Here is a kid who is just lazy and doesn't want to do work!" This is not the case. We need to learn about other things in life. Everything that we learn in school is not everything we want to learn about. We should have to do all work at school so we can do these things at home. Also, some poeple might say that homework is important for our future. But if we do a good job at school, that would helps us prepare for the next grade level.

In conclusion, please, teachers, just stop the homework! "Please!"

Appendix B
Points Mentioned by Children

<Essay>

A DARE Kid to a DARE Adult	What D.A.R.E. Means to Me
1. Tells facts about: --the word (the program). DARE (5) --friends and families. (2) --how to say no. (1) --why drug is not good (1) --jungle (1) --long-term effect of drugs (1) --result of getting drunk (1) 2. Ending part is nice, cool, strong(6) 3. Light, easier to read, has jokes. (2) 4. Expresses feelings and emotion, more than facts. (2) 5. Talks about many things. (2) 6. Starts with question. (2) 7. Tells about positive view of attitude. 8. Has details in many points. (1) 9. The title talks about other people. (1) 10. Tells in sentences, not by listing facts. (1) 11. Tells other people, not yourself. (1) 12. Like interviewing an officer. (1) 13. Uses "spice words" (1) 14. Has a principle. (1) 15. Has a flow: imprisonment, poverty, death. (1) 16. Has one-word sentence. (1)	1. Tells more facts: --Kinds of drugs (1) --Consequences of each drugs(4) --How to say no (1) --What you learned about DARE (1) 2. Tells more detail. (3) 3. Shows examples. (2) 4. Tells facts because some people (younger grades) may not know about drugs (2) 5. Has strong ending. (1) 6. Expresses feeling. (1) 7. Shorter, but makes sense. (1) 8. Put together in a better way. (1) 9. Good title. (1) 10. Kept me going. (1) 11. Has more opinions. (1) 12. Has no spelling miss. (1) 13. I agree to the opinion. (1) --Every school should have DARE 14. Well organized. (1) 15. Clear. (1)

<Story>

Bobby and His Pizza	The Cursed Island
1. Funnier. (2) 2. There are more things in this story that could really happen. (1) 3. Makes sense. (1) 4. It exaggerates. (1) --He didn't notice the meteoroid- --Flew so high. 5. The part that the boss let him go was good because this story would never happen if the boss didn't let him go. (1) 6. Catches your attention. --reached the sky. (1) 7. Good because I sometimes trip, too. (1) 8. Somebody is kind here; not everybody in the world is kind, and doesn't give you a second chance. The boss didn't fire him. (1) 9. Describes. (1) 10. Length is good. (1) 11. Ending is neat. (1) 12. Tittle matches the story. (1)	1. Makes you think that it could happen in real life. (2) 2. Makes more sense. (2) --Why the explorers were there. --How the old lady was living. 3. Funny. (2) 4. Has more details. (2) 5. Has more expressions. (2) --"Leave! Or you will die!" --"Da, da-, da-, Boo!" 6. The ending is good. (2) 7. The plot has consistency. (1) 8. Describe like you can see it. (1) 9. Spooky, scary. (1) --people turn into different creatures. 10. Has more activities and actions. (1) --Run away. --Sacrifice. --Scare away the wolf. 11. More exciting. (1) --"Leave! Or you will die!" --"Da-, da-, da-, Boo!" 12. The beginning is good as a story. (1) 13. Tells the exact part that the lady changed into a wolf. (1) 14. Sentence and sentence are combined better. (1) 15. The dialogue makes the story interesting. (1) 16. Put together well. (1)

<Persuasive Paper>

Persuasive Paper	Why I think we shouldn't have . . .
1. It has good reasons. (2) 2. It has many reasons. It includes more things. (2) 3. It gives specific reasons. (2) --"they could work on book reports science lab . . ." (2) 4. It's longer. (2) 5. Has paragraphs. (2) 6. It's more serious. (1) 7. Refers more to real life. (1) 8. It doesn't have spelling errors. (1) 9. Has good organization. (1) 10. An opinion in-between the two is written. (1) --"Long term assignments are different." 11. The flow is good. (1) --rest, long-term assignments, company. 12. Thinks about the reader. (1)	1. It made better points. (4) 2. It talks to people. (2) 3. It's more exciting to read. (1) --"Here is a kid . . " is funny. --"Please!" 4. The ideas are put in words better. (1) --"It's hard enough going . . . " --"cuts our time to relax and play" --"We need to learn about . . . " 5. It stayed on the subject more. (1) 6. The conclusion part sounds like persuading. (1) --"please don't send us homework." (1) 7. It has paragraphs. (1) 8. The beginning is good. (1) 9. It uses real-life examples. (1)

Appendix C
Children's Definition of Genre

<Essay>

Children who chose A DARE Kid to a DARE Adult	Children who chose What D.A.R.E. Means to Me
1. Essay shows your feeling about it. 2. Essay is to tell my opinion and feeling. (2) 3. Essay has opinion and facts that support the opinion. (2) 4. You state your opinion and tell the consequence of it. So you tell about things people don't know. 5. Give a strong opinion, using facts. 6. Give a main fact and three supporting facts.	1. Essay is a paper that tells about the facts about one subject, and you put all the facts together. 2. Essay is expressing your opinion on facts. 3. In essays, you can tell the information you have learned, but you put your opinion every now and then. 4. Essay should have an opinion, but facts, too. It needs balance. 5. It's paper that uses facts and opinions. 6. It explains about a subject--what it is, what you should do. 7. A paper mainly on facts. 8. You tell three facts about something.

<Story>

Children who chose Bobby and His Pizza	Children who chose The Cursed Island
1. A story is something like suspense because it keeps you wondering. Funny stories are also good. Creativeness, and how they use their own words, instead of just copying out of the book is important. 2. Stories are funny, realistic, and it should be written so that people can understand. 3. Fiction stories can have things that could not really happen. To write a story, you have to concentrate, and think hard. 4. It has adventures and actions. So it has a flow and a conclusion. 5. It is something easy to read. 6. Story is a "realistic fantasy."	1. Spooky stories, adventure stories, and fantasies. (2) 2. A story has a lot of action. Writing a story is to write down what pops in my mind. 3. A story has a good beginning, middle, and end. 4. Stories are interesting to read, and makes the reader wonder what's going to happen next. It doesn't have to be true. 5. It has a flow, some details, introduction of characters, and a conclusion. 6. It has dialogues, and surprises the reader as it goes on. 7. It is interesting, and has dialogues and plots. 8. It has a plot, characters, and action. (2) 9. It has details. It is written like you can see it.
1. Good stories are interesting stories like mystery and scary stories. They keep you to the book. A good story is something like these two stories combined. To write a story, you need to have imagination, sometimes realism, lots of dialogue, correct punctuation, make it longer, and give lots of detail.	

<Persuasive Paper>

Children who chose Persuasive Paper	Children who chose Why I think we should not have . . .
1. Something that persuade people. Make the people see from their point of view. 2. It should convince people of something. (2) 3. Write to try to get someone change his mind about something. 4. To change people's mind on what they don't like. 5. It has lots of ideas and personal experiences to convince someone. 6. To make sense, it is put into order, and has supporting facts. 7. You state a realistic opinion, and support it.	1. To persuade someone into going to their idea. 2. To try to persuade someone about something. (2) 3. Something like talking to someone, begging, and making strong points. 4. A paper that has good reasons. 5. A paper that has a strong opinion and good reasons for it. (2) 6. You try to persuade someone by using facts.
1. It is paper that is persuading. It has facts.	

Neither
1. To persuade someone of something.